

this government to deal with unemployment. Under the pretext of fighting inflation, they have deliberately created that situation. I will refrain from quoting figures since we can see them daily in the press and in *Hansard*. However, I still believe a responsible government should create a human, receptive, safe atmosphere that encourages investment—something which has been lacking these past six years because it has not been fostered.

Does the full blame rest with the government? Is this situation due to present economic conditions not only in Canada but throughout the world? One thing is certain, the situation is getting worse instead of improving.

For my part, I asked a couple of ministers as well as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) whether it would not be possible to call an emergency meeting of all those in Canada involved in the economy, i.e. representatives of unions, of industry, provincial governments and federal government. Such a meeting is obviously necessary. The reply I received was merely that they did not see the necessity for it. But the government which says it is responsible should at least have the courage to recognize that it has not found the answer. Does anyone know the magic solution? Maybe not, but I think that we would at least have a chance of finding a valuable and profitable one for all society if we were to call a meeting of all those interested in the economy.

Thus we could prove that it is in the interest of financiers, of the responsible people both at the labour and employer levels to meet and try to find a solution. Management, faced with the good faith of the government—which has yet to be demonstrated—would invite everyone to co-operate more directly with the government; they would certainly be pleased to offer their co-operation and to advise the government on labour matters, because it seems that the government needs such counselling. In fact, I think that industrialists, financiers and union experts might advantageously give advice to the government.

This is why I suggested some time ago that the government should seriously contemplate the establishment of the old age pension at 60. As thousands of workers are in the 60 to 65 age bracket, I think it would be profitable to contemplate seriously this possibility which, at the same time, would open job opportunities to thousands of young people since 40 per cent of the Canadian unemployed are under 25. It would be normal, humane, and just, I think, to allow some 300,000 workers—this total represents the number of workers aged 60 to 65—to retire so that the young might find jobs, because they at least want to work. The older workers deserve a rest and an increase in the old age pension.

Who would pay for this? That is the question we shall be asked. At the present time, a person who lives on unemployment insurance benefits and social welfare allowances costs approximately \$100 per week to the taxpayer. This amount could be paid to those entitled to the old age pension and this would be less expensive than to grant social welfare allowances to 700,000 or 800,000 unemployed people, as is now the case. Then I

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imagine that this measure could partially settle the present unemployment problem.

I hope that the government will seriously consider this proposal and that there will be an end to the charges that our remarks are nothing but negative criticism. I believe that this policy should be seriously studied and applied if we are sincere when we say we wish to solve the unemployment issue, as this policy could create a favourable social climate. In fact, it would permit our citizens to retire at 60 on a decent income.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I should like also to deal for a few minutes with the program put forward this week regarding students. The minister deplored earlier that the hon. members did not dare approve this program. Of course, I readily recognize that this program is desirable. But is it enough? No, unfortunately, considering that almost one million students will be seeking employment this summer and that the plan provides opportunities for 500,000 students only, since our budget is approximately \$14 billion and the money allotted to these programs amounts to approximately \$57 per student. We might have done better.

Mr. Pepin: Private enterprise will have to pitch in.

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, we will surely need private enterprise, and that is why I thought the government would call as soon as possible a meeting of business leaders who could advise the authorities quite objectively, thus enabling them to get good results.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is up to the government to provide jobs for students next summer.

I deplored recently the government's failure to give an objective answer to the resolution passed by the Young Liberals Convention concerning the creation of a civil corps which would have enabled those young people to find employment, a responsibility which, besides, rests with the government.

Then, the refusal to seriously consider this resolution is unfortunate and surely alarming for the students. This civil corps would have allowed the government to put a certain number of young people at the disposal of municipalities where they are urgently needed.

For instance, this summer, some small municipalities will need young people of both sexes as counsellors at playgrounds and summer camps. All they can do is hire one or two counsellors for 500, 600 or 1,000 school-children, and that is not enough.

I think that as members of Parliament, it is our duty to ask the government to set up such services.

Mr. Pepin: Why not vergers?

Mr. La Salle: The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is not serious, which is unfortunate because I feel this debate should be really serious.

Mr. Pepin: While we are at it—

Mr. La Salle: In any event, Mr. Speaker, I am also thinking of all that could be done to fight pollution.